REMARKS

Claims 21-23 are pending in this application. Claim 23 is objected to; and claims 21 and 22 are rejected. Claims 21 and 23 are amended hereby.

Responsive to the objection to the abstract, Applicants have amended the abstract keeping in mind the comments of the Examiner. Applicants respectfully submit that the abstract is in allowable form.

Responsive to the objection to the specification, Applicants have amended the specification keeping in mind the comments of the Examiner. Applicants respectfully submit that the specification is in allowable form.

Responsive to the rejection of claims 21 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,387,220 (Mohrsen et al.), Applicants have amended claim 21, and submit that claims 21 and 22 are now in condition for allowance.

Mohrsen et al. '220 disclose a vacuum conveyor (Fig. 1) where, during start-up of the machine or after an interruption of the paper-making process, paper web 9 initially travels downwardly from roll or cylinder 10 (along path 9x) into a broke pit (column 5, lines 43-46). Then, paper web 9 must be threaded from section to section of the machine and through each of the sections, e.g. through a calender 15 (column 5, lines 46-48). For that purpose, at first a narrow edge strip or lead strip 9' (separated from the web by a cutting device) is transferred by vacuum belt conveyors 18 and 19 to a further belt conveyor 20 along a path 9a, illustrated by a dotted line (column 5, lines 48-52). The transfer of lead strip 9' is started by an air jet 5 which changes the path of lead strip 9' (as shown at 9y) up to belt conveyor 18 (column 5, lines 52-54). Belt conveyor 20 is supported by rotatable support 23 and has a pivot axis 8 being approximately vertical to the plane of the forwardly traveling belt run and being arranged close to the upstream

end of conveyor 20 (column 5, lines 54-58). When the beginning of lead strip 9 arrives at conveyor 20 the conveyor is in an oblique position 20a of (Fig. 2) so conveyor 20 transfers the lead strip into rope nip at roll 13 (column 5, lines 58-61). Thereafter ropes 16, 17 transfer the lead strip through calender 15 while conveyor 20 is re-turned around pivot axis 8 into the straight forward position 20b (column 5, lines 61-64). Thereby, conveyor 20 moves lead strip 9' into the area of the web width W and into the roll nips of calender 15 (column 5, lines 64-67). Each of vacuum conveyors 18, 19, 20 includes an endless perforated belt traveling over two rolls or pulleys (column 6, lines 18-19). Between these pulleys, there may be suction box 21 connected to a vacuum source (not shown) or other device to create a negative pressure at the conveying run of the belt (column 6, lines 20-22). As shown in Fig. 1, conveyor 20 is supported by connecting structure 22 which connects conveyor 20 to rotatable support 23, which is rotatable about pivot axis 8 and being connected to a machine frame 6 or any other suitable stationary structure (column 6, lines 24-28).

In contrast, claim 21, as amended, recites in part: ". . . diverting the tail using said threading arm assembly in a direction transverse to the machine direction toward said rope nip; aligning the tail with said rope nip using said threading arm assembly . . . ". (Emphasis added.) Applicants submit that such an invention is neither taught, disclosed nor suggested by Mohrsen et al. '220 or any of the other cited references, alone or in combination, and has distinct advantages thereover.

Mohrsen et al. '220 disclose a conveyor that transfers the lead strip into a rope nip, and thereafter, the conveyor is re-turned around a pivot axis into the straight forward position thereby moving the lead strip into the area of the web width. However, Mohrsen et al. '220 fail to disclose or suggest the step of aligning the tail with the rope nip using the threading arm

assembly.

An advantage of the present invention is the elimination of a manual alignment of the tail when the tail does not align with the rope nip.

For all of the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that claim 21, and claim 22 depending therefrom, are now in condition for allowance, which is hereby respectfully requested.

At page 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner has indicated that claim 23 is allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims, for which courtesy the Examiner is thanked. Applicants have amended claim 23 to include the limitations of claim 21. For all of the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that claim 23 is now in condition for allowance, which is hereby respectfully requested

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that no combination of the cited references teaches, discloses or suggests the subject matter of the amended claims. The pending claims are therefore in condition for allowance, and Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of all rejections and allowance of the claims.

In the event Applicants have overlooked the need for an extension of time, an additional extension of time, payment of fee, or additional payment of fee, Applicants hereby conditionally petition therefor and authorizes that any charges be made to Deposit Account No. 20-0095, TAYLOR & AUST, P.C.

Should any question concerning any of the foregoing arise, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (260) 897-3400.

Respectfully submitted,

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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: MS Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on: September 14, 2004.

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September 14, 2004
Date